



## **MONTHLY REPORT OCTOBER 2019**

### **Commercial and Recreational Fisheries**

- October brings many changes to shellfishing areas and seasons. As of October 1:
  - All South Wellfleet shellfish areas were open to recreational shellfishing, basically from Indian Neck south to all of Lieutenant Island.
  - South Lieutenant Island opened to the commercial harvest of oysters again.
  - Bay scallop season opened. The department estimates that more than 442 bushels of bay scallops were harvested during the month, as tracked on commercial patrol.
- The last day of vibrio season was October 19. Ice is no longer necessary for transporting oysters.
- On the last Sunday in October, the 27<sup>th</sup>, Chipman's Cove opened to both commercial and recreational harvesting. The weather was stormy, and the tide bordered on dusk, so only about a dozen commercial harvesters turned out, and no recreational shellfishermen came. Since then, however, it has been very busy with both commercial and recreational activity.
- The wild set of oysters from this summer continues to impress. The oysters are growing incredibly and they seem to be everywhere, but especially good in North Wellfleet.
- With the end of vibrio season, commercial oystering picked up. A rough, conservative estimate of commercial catches for the month is more than 128 bushels of oysters (up from 40 in September), more than 122 bushels of quahogs (down from 205 in September), and more than 110 bushels of blood clams (up from 75 in September), as tracked on commercial patrol.
- Recreational shellfish permit sales for October were two Annual Resident, three Annual Senior Resident and two Annual Non-Resident. Revenue totaled \$600, bringing the total number of recreational permits sold to date up to 878 = \$44,465. This represents an increase from 2018.

### **Enforcement**

- A shellfisherman was given a verbal warning for not having enough ice for his oysters and made to immediately remediate.
- Grant inspections and re-inspections continued. The department created a plan and schedule to ensure all remaining grants will have their required annual inspection.
- A few educational discussions were had with recreational shellfishermen in Chipman's Cove about seed oysters.
- All commercial shellfishermen and grant holders were informed about regulation changes regarding over-wintering aquaculture gear with a link to the new over-wintering contract.
- A joint Shellfish-Harbor Master Dept.s meeting was held to inform all shellfishermen about potential changes to Duck Creek shellfish harvesting areas around the marina and how it would impact boat operators and wild pickers.
- Inspections were made of shellfish going to the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Wellfleet OysterFest.

### **State and Town Relations**

- Shellfish Constable Nancy Civetta helped Krill Carson of New England Coastal Wildlife Alliance get out to an Indian Neck grant where a large ocean sunfish had died. Krill performed a necropsy and with the help of Civetta, two volunteers and many shellfishermen, towed it to shore and weighed it. It was more than 1,400 pounds, the biggest Krill had ever documented.
- Civetta conducted a shellfish survey with a state biologist to assess the impact on shellfish resources in the Herring River of a barge proposed to be used for work to replace a private dwelling's concrete retaining wall. Photo documentation was made. The department submitted a request for mitigation money for the negative impacts as part of the Order of Conditions and attended the Conservation Committee hearing.

- Civetta worked closely with Mass. Division of Marine Fisheries to create two sub areas for Duck Creek in order to make sure we would not lose important productive shellfishing areas.
- Civetta attended an Executive Session with the Selectboard regarding the HDYLTA Trust, a Shellfish Advisory Board meeting, a Wastewater Committee meeting and a Mass. Shellfish Officers Assn. committee meeting on the so-called Cutler bill.
- Civetta attended the Cape Cod Commission Community Process on Climate Meeting and a Department Heads OysterFest debrief meeting.
- Barnstable County conducted its annual oyster growth study sampling.

### **Propagation**

- On October 1<sup>st</sup>, the department's new AmeriCorps service member Travis Lavenski started. His first project was helping load the barge with oysters and quahogs from the town propagation bed and distributing them in Chipman's Cove.
- Over the course of the month, the department distributed tens of thousands of oysters from our propagation bed to Chipman's Cove and other commercial and recreational areas, as well as to the Indian Neck recreational area.
- Oyster seed donations from grant holders continued to come in. Some were given as stacks of hats for us to break down; others as seed in totes. All were put on town propagation bed and will be overwintered in the pits at the transfer station. We still have calculations to make, but we believe we have surpassed the half million mark of donated oyster seed so far this year! We are very grateful!
- The department also received donated legal-size oysters, which were broadcast to shellfishing areas open to both commercial and recreational harvesters.
- The department concluded its experiment to use sepa bags filled with sea clam shells deployed on racks in Chipman's Cove to catch spat. It was a terrific success; the cultch caught a tremendous amount of seed oysters, which were distributed around Chipman's Cove.
- The department also concluded its second year of a study with Barbara Brennessel and John Portnoy to document for the Mass. Division of Marine Fisheries if there is a late set of oyster spat in Chipman's Cove to support leaving spat collecting devices there until October 20.

### **Education and Public Relations**

- The Mass. Dept. of Agricultural Resources reached out to the department to ask it to host an international buyers' visit at Mayo Beach, which we did. Civetta participated in a promotional video to be used to encourage international buyers to purchase Wellfleet farm-raised oysters.
- The entire department assisted writers and photographers from the *Cape Cod Times* and *The Provincetown Banner* on stories to promote the Wellfleet shellfishing industry in advance of the Wellfleet OysterFest.
- Civetta met with Barbara Brennessel and John Portnoy regarding the initiation of a pre-restoration spat study in the Herring River.
- The department participated in a Center for Coastal Studies sonar survey of Wellfleet Harbor to identify areas with aquaculture gear. We worked with shellfishermen to immediately try and retrieve gear, but it was difficult. Three racks, a few bags and a beach chair were recovered. We will await audited data from CCS and conduct another retrieval effort.
- On October 31, AmeriCorps Cape Cod served with the Department and dug quahogs from our propagation bed and did other work there. They helped create remote-set bags for next season.
- Assistant Constable "Johnny Clam" Mankevetch conducted two shellfish tours with grantholder Jake Puffer on Mayo beach as part of the Wellfleet OysterFest. Civetta ran the event's Shuck Off.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Civetta, Shellfish Constable